

Appendix C

Finding Acceptance *From Others... From God... & From Myself*

Very early in our lives, as self-awareness develops and grows, it is normal for each of us to question our value as a person. Deep within ourselves, we ask questions such as;

- “Am I loved?” ...
- “Do I have value?” ...
- “Has life cheated me?”
- “Am I enough (to be accepted by others)?”

Then, when traumatic events come our way (and they will come!), events such as rejection...abandonment... neglect... shame... moral failures, etc., cause our lives to become derailed, bringing great upheaval and doubts about our self-worth. People respond to these events in many different ways. Some people compartmentalize these terrible emotions and memories from their consciousness as a means of self-preservation while others experience the full onslaught to the point of a mental breakdown.

As these events unfold in our lives, we become very prone to internalizing false conclusions (or “strongholds”) about our circumstances and ourselves that draw us into a very dark place filled with unexplainable emotional upheavals... addictions.... obsessions... unexplainable health issues, etc.

A lie (and all of its resulting consequences) can only be conquered by the truth. And pure and undefiled Truth is only found in God’s Word. Therefore, we must recognize and renounce the lies that we have accepted as true and replace them with the truth of God’s Word.

There are at least 3 areas of hidden strongholds that must be torn down for us to be at peace with ourselves, other people and our God. What follows are 3 questions that reveal those 3 areas, the root issues that undergird them, and insights that can help us to tear down those strongholds and replace them with truth.....

1. What do you really think of yourself?

- How we truthfully answer this question will reveal areas of self-rejection and/or levels of unforgiveness toward ourselves for our past transgressions. It is not unhealthy to have regrets for our past behavior but it must be quickly taken to the Lord in prayer with a repentant heart and confessed.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

Once confession is made for the past, it **must** be released **through prayer** or we will remain in a self-imposed prison within ourselves due to the sin of unbelief and make God a liar regarding His forgiveness:

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but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead...
Philippians 3:13

***“Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past....”**“I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.”* Isaiah 43:18,25

- When we look at ourselves in the mirror and evaluate who we see, we are prone to view ourselves based on outward appearance. Outward perfection is an unachievable goal and will only be a snare to entrap us into a distorted view of our self worth. It is far better to use the same standards of beauty as God does... by the condition and content of our heart.

*But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, **but the LORD looks at the heart.**”* 1 Sam 16:7

*Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— **rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.***
1 Peter 3:3,4

- We tend to measure our self-worth and importance by outward accomplishments that draw the favorable attention from other people. When we fail to measure up to our perceived acceptable standards, we often conclude that we have been a failure in life. If this were a reliable measure of success, everyone with an impressive resume would be the most satisfied and fulfilled people that we know. The sad reality is that over-achievers often reach the end of their lives feeling empty and unfulfilled.

In God’s economy, true success is measured by how much we reflect the image of Christ. It is a lifelong and ongoing process of sanctification that will bring forth its fruit in its season.

*From men with Your hand, O LORD, From men of the world,
whose portion is in this life, And whose belly You fill with Your treasure; They are satisfied with children, and leave their abundance to their babes. As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; **I will be satisfied ⁱⁿ with Your likeness when I awake.***
Psalm 17:14,15

*For those whom He foreknew, **He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,** so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;* Romans 8:29

- When we focus on past failures, the poor choices we made, and the wasted life that we have lived thus far, we tend to conclude that all opportunities for recapturing those missed opportunities are gone. And to some extent, that is true. However, if you are still breathing, God has a redeeming purpose for your life in mind and delights in providing opportunities to redeem the years of that which was lost.

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*“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
² ...To comfort all who mourn,³ To console those who mourn...
**To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness, Isaiah 61:1-3,***

2. What do you really believe others think about you?

- How we truthfully answer this question will reveal much about our priorities in life, our fears of rejection by others, and the level of unbelief we have regarding God’s promises. When we value the approval of others over the approval of God, it becomes a snare to us that makes us slaves to their personal agenda. As a result, God’s voice speaking to our hearts is crowded out and leads us down a path of potential disaster.

The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted
Prov. 29:25

*I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another **and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?*** John 5:43,44

*For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but **when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.***
2 Corinthians 10:12

3. What do you really think God thinks about you?.

- How we truthfully answer this question reveals our perception of God’s character, His capacity to forgive, and our willingness to believe what He has clearly stated in His Word. If he can’t be trusted in one area of our lives, how can we rely on His promise of salvation to all who believe?

So, consider for a moment what God has promised in His Word...

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- **To those who receive Christ into their hearts, God has adopted them as His children.**

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, **not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.** John 1:12,13*

- **Our place in heaven is sealed at salvation and cannot be taken away...**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ... In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—**having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,** Ephesians 1:3-5, 13*

- **God's acceptance of all of His children is based only on the righteousness of Christ and our willingness to believe Him and receive it, not on our human effort.**

*...**not** having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith** Philippians 3:9*

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly." Galatians 2:21

- **God's Provision For our Sins is Enough**

*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, **having forgiven you all trespasses**, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Colossians 2:13-15*

*"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, " Though your **sins** are like **scarlet**, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. Isaiah 1:18*

*There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus..... Romans 8:1*

- When Jesus' disciples asked to Him to reveal their heavenly father to them, Jesus shared the parable of the prodigal son. **It is noteworthy that prodigal never ceased to be a son or accepted by the father even though he strayed far from home for a season** Luke 15:11-32 [The prodigal son]

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- What about our **FEARS**... ..of Rejection...of the Future....
of Evil triumphing over us ...of Eternal Security

*Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*
*"Behold, all those who were incensed against you
Shall be ashamed and disgraced; They shall be as nothing,
And those who strive with you shall perish.
You shall seek them and not find them—
Those who contended with you. Those who war against you
Shall be as nothing, As a nonexistent thing.
For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand,
Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'* Isaiah 41:10-13

*God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling... Be
still, and know that I am God;*

Psalm 46:1-3,10a

- God forgets the past that is covered by the blood of Christ and commands us to do likewise.

*"Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past..., even I, am the one
who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And **I will not remember your sins.**"*

Isaiah 43:18,25

- God and His promises are trustworthy

Joshua's last words to his people:

*"Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all
your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke
concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.*

Joshua 23:14

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 8:32

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Having considered these things and pondered them in your heart, if you would like to affirm them before the Lord and know the freedom that comes from tearing down strongholds by believing these promises, then consider nailing it down by praying aloud to the Lord the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the way that You made me. Forgive me for focusing on the outside of my life and not seeing the potential beauty of the inside. Forgive me for focusing on the condition of my mind and not seeing the potential in my heart to love others. Forgive me for words of self-rejection upon myself that brought a curse into my life. I do renounce them and thank you for seeing the righteousness of Christ each time you look upon me. Forgive me for focusing on what I lost and not seeing the potential for what lies ahead. Forgive me for the unbelief in my heart toward your promises given to me about who I am in Christ and my acceptance by You. Mold me into the image of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and give me a heart that can express unconditional love, especially to those who have caused me to have a broken heart. And As You give me grace to do so, help me to make all these things a priority in my life. Lord, tear down any stronghold that remains in my life pertaining to these things, take back that ground in my heart that they stood on, pluck out any evil that remains, nullify any curses, and restore my soul. And having reclaimed and restored my soul, Lord cast out every spirit from my soul that denies that Jesus has come in the flesh and do not permit them to enter my life ever again. For it is written:

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

[Colossians 2:13-15]

Thank you, Lord, for all these things. Amen